

Model User Groups Current Activity – August, 2008

The Travel Model Improvement Program (TMIP) maintains a database of Model User Groups (MUGs) for the purpose of housing and sharing information and supporting the community of practice. The MUG database consists of 25 regional MUGs: four in California; two each in New York and Washington; and one each in Alabama, Colorado, Iowa, Illinois, Kentucky, Minnesota, Missouri, North Carolina, Ohio, Oregon, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia and Wisconsin. There is also a Canadian MUG in the Toronto area and a southwestern regional MUG. Furthermore, there are six model or software specific MUGs, chiefly managed by software vendors.

This paper is a snapshot of agency MUG activities, for the MUGs with activity, current as of August, 2008. For our purposes, current is defined as having a meeting or planning a meeting in calendar year 2008. Eleven MUGs held or planned meetings exploring a variety of technical topics. Naturally there is considerable overlap in topic areas as many modelers face similar issues in operating their models. There is also healthy representation of local issues.

AMUG (Atlanta Model Users Group) is a forum and opportunity to share knowledge and experience, where modeling information is being disseminated. It has an approximate membership of 40-50.

AMUG has recently created a brand new MUG webpage at <http://www.atlantaregional.com/arc/html/4420.aspx>. The new page informs users of upcoming meetings, including posting agendas. At AMUGs August 15th meeting the following topics were discussed:

- GDOT's Project Prioritization Using the ARC Model and HERS-ST
- GDOT's Radial Freeway Study Using the ARC Model and Simulation
- Citilabs New Modeling Tools and Software Enhancements
- Climate Change Model Scenarios
- Model Users Group Subcommittee on Transit Modeling

Other recent technical topics of meetings at AMUG include logit-based telecommuting assignment and scheduling integer program/model for the Atlanta region.

California Inter-Agency Forums on Transportation Modeling (CIA Forums)

Approximate membership: 40. Attendees include: modeling staff and managers from Caltrans HQ and Districts, other state agencies (Air Resources Board, Energy Commission), region transportation planning agencies, and city planning departments. They often have presentations by private and university vendors but otherwise do not invite them. In addition to technical presentations they often coordinate public sector modeling work. CIA Forums is next planning to meet in September. They are trying to interact with some local user groups and think close coordination with TMIP would be valuable.

Chicago Area Transportation Modeling Users Group (CATMUG)

Approximate membership: 112. CATMUG meets monthly to share information. Recent subjects of CATMUG's monthly meeting have been:

- Using GPS Data Collection for an Internet Based Prompted Recall Household Travel Survey (August, 2008); and

- Travel Demand Modeling and User Benefit Calculation for the Proposed Kenosha Streetcar Extension (July, 2008)

Kentucky Traffic Demand Model Users Group (MUG) Website:

<http://www.planning.kytc.ky.gov/traffic/MUG.asp>. The MUG includes representatives from KYTC, Kentucky metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs), the consulting industry, academia, and other state DOTs. The MUG meets three times per year to address current travel demand modeling issues. Subjects covered at a recent MUG meeting include:

- Socioeconomic Data Files
- Network Geometry
- Possible User Interface Add-On's
- Kentucky Statewide Model
- Sub-Area Analysis Using TransCAD
- Louisville-Southern Indiana Ohio River Bridges Project - Preliminary Traffic and Revenue Study
- Toll Considerations for US 27 to I-75 Connector Scoping Study
- I-69 in Indiana: A Toll Model Case Study and Its Implications for NEPA

Midwest Travel Model User Group (MTMUG)

Website: <http://www.mtmug.org/> Approximate membership: 20. MTMUG has a meeting planned for September 2008. Topics to be covered include:

- Transit Modeling 101
- Planning & Simulation Modeling with PTV Vision
- Status of the Census Transportation Planning Package (CTPP) 2010

Mn/DOT Travel Demand Modeling Coordinating Committee

Approximate membership: 20. The group meets quarterly. Recent topics at meetings include:

- Micro Simulation: When is it required and how have others responded?
- A Case Study – Interstate I-94 and I-29 Operations Study in Fargo/Moorhead. Working with Federal Guidance for Micro Simulation and MPO Regional Modeling
- Charting the Travel Demand Modeling and Forecasting Process in Minnesota and Identifying Opportunities Where Additional Guidance or Training Would Be Useful
- Incorporating Current Environmental, Demographic, Economic, and Financial Considerations into Travel Demand Modeling Activities

Modeling Task Force, Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG)

Website: <http://www.scag.ca.gov/modeling/mtf/aboutmtf.htm>

The Modeling Task Force provides guidance to SCAG's Regional Modeling Program, coordinates the region's various modeling programs, and provides a forum to share model related information and new ideas. Approximate membership: 30. Recent technical topics include:

- SCAG Modeling Projects
 - Discussion of major modeling projects and preparation for 2010 Travel Survey.
- OCTA Modeling Projects
- Arterial Speed Study
 - Overview of study methodology and update on progress.

- Weekend Travel Demand Model
- Caliper's latest research on Traffic Assignment Convergence
- Imperial County Cross-Border Survey Model Assessment
- SCAG new model distribution
- Value Analysis of Truck Toll Lanes in Southern California

Ohio Travel Demand Model Users Group

Website: <http://www.dot.state.oh.us/urban/mug/mug.htm>

Focus: To educate, inform, improve, and promote travel demand forecasting as a part of the transportation planning process among Ohio's metropolitan planning organizations, department of transportation, consultants, government leaders, and educational institutions. Approximate membership: 50 (30 active). Recent meeting topics include:

- Training in the Use of Models for Project Traffic Forecasting
- ODOT Roadway Engineers and Certified Traffic
- Composition of a Regional Data Set
- Determination of Base and Future Year Employment at the TAZ Level

OMUG Oregon Modeling Users Group

Website: <http://www.oregon.gov/ODOT/TD/TP/OMUG.shtml>

Focus: To provide an informal opportunity to share technical modeling information, provide educational and informational material on new technology, specific projects and other topics of interest to the transport/land use modeling community

Approximate Membership: 70. Recent meeting topics include:

- Conferences Information
 - June 19-20, 5th OR Symposium on Integrated Land Use-Transport Models, Portland
 - Tlumip.org
 - June 22-24, TRB Innovations in Transportation Modeling (ITM), Portland
 - September 17-19, Transport Planning for Small to Medium Cities, Portland
- Dynamic Tour Based Model for Portland Metro
- Re-evaluating JEM-n-R Code and Utilities

Tennessee Model User Group (TNMUG) Website: <http://web.utk.edu/~tnmug08/docu.htm>

Recent topics of TNMUG meetings include:

- Freight Planning
- The Travel Demand Bristol Model
- The North Carolina Experience with Project Planning
- The Johnson City Travel Model
- Discussion between Modeling and Project Planning

VTM (Virginia Transportation Modeling)

Website: <http://www.virginiadot.org/vtm/>

Focus: To serve as a forum for improving the state of the practice of travel demand modeling in Virginia. Approximate membership: 20. Topics discussed at recent VTM meetings include:

- 2010 TAZ Definition Process
- NHTS Add-On Surveys

- Statewide Modeling Activities
- Corradino Team Modeling work
- Virginia Statewide Model Evaluation
- Citilabs presentation on CUBE CARGO

DISCLAIMER

The paper is based solely on information provided by state or regional MUGs. The summary does not represent the opinions of FHWA and does not constitute an endorsement, recommendation or specification by FHWA. It does not determine or advocate a policy decision/directive or make specific recommendations regarding future research initiatives.